



GHN
CITY OF CHICAGO



OPEN SPACE



Below:
Bike rental/access node, illustrating destinations and vertical circulation up to a trail on the 49th Street rail line from Halsted Street.



OPEN SPACE

Since 1998, the City's acquisition and expansion of new neighborhood parks has been guided by *CitySpace - An Open Space Plan for Chicago*. A goal of the plan is to provide a minimum of two acres of parkland per 1,000 residents in each of Chicago's 77 community areas. Fifteen years after the plan's adoption, GHN community areas remain ranked in the top quarter of

all city community areas in terms of the amount of open space acreage per person, with most neighborhoods possessing a surplus of space relative to City standards (Figure 7).

A related CitySpace planning goal was to provide open space within a reasonable walking distance from every home in the city. Through the Campus Park Program, a joint

development initiative of the City, Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Park District, more than 100 asphalt school playgrounds were transformed into spaces with lawns and playgrounds for use by students and neighbors. Nine Campus Parks were developed at schools in the GHN area. More than three community gardens have been built in the area as well for use by community



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OPEN SPACE GOAL AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: Expand the number and variety of recreational opportunities.

- 1 Develop a neighborhood park on City-owned land adjacent to the landmark Raber House.
- 2 Continue to connect residents, teachers and students to resources and programs for developing community and school gardens.
- 3 Create a new park in New City that connects to Micek Park along the Englewood Loop.
- 4 Create a public trail on the abandoned 49th Line.
- 5 Expand Back of the Yards Park along the 49th Line.
- 6 Create the Englewood Line trail on the abandoned 59th Line.

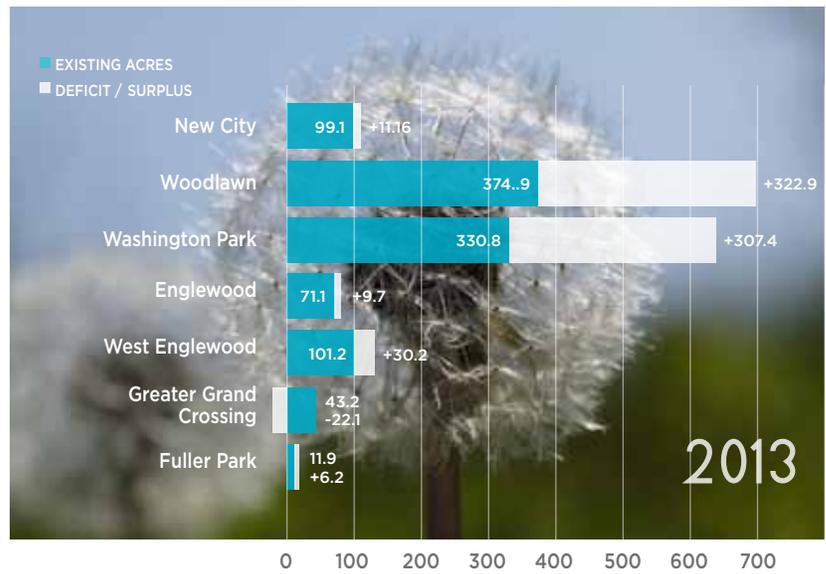


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residents through agreements with the NeighborSpace land trust, which was formed as a result of the *CitySpace* plan.

Although the GHN area largely enjoys convenient access to open space amenities, opportunities exist to create new and unique spaces. Norfolk & Southern owns the abandoned elevated line between 58th and 59th streets that could easily accommodate a trail, linking urban agriculture sites as illustrated on page 30 and 31. Openlands, a regional non-profit land

FIGURE 7
GHN AREA OPEN SPACE DEFICIT
AT 2 ACRES PER 1000 RESIDENTS BY COMMUNITY AREA



Left: Proposed New City Park, adjacent to the CSX line. View looking southeast over 51st Place toward Hoyne Avenue.

conservation organization, working with community residents illustrated this concept, naming it the New ERA Trail. Another unused elevated rail line runs along 49th Street and is owned by three railroads. The 59th and 49th Street Lines both end at the

north-south running CSX rail line and intermodal yard to the west.

There is potential to link the 49th and 59th Lines with land along the CSX line to the west and Halsted Street to the east to create the Englewood

Loop. The Englewood Loop could provide a 50-acre, six-mile long open space resource for the area, not unlike the “606” trail and park under construction along Bloomingdale Avenue on the Northwest Side.





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site design group

Top: View of Raber House Park looking northwest from 58th Street.

Above: The proposed Englewood Loop at-grade and elevated crossing. View looking west from Hoyne Avenue over Garfield Boulevard.





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INFRAS



GREEN STRUCTURE



Below:

Green infrastructure route along Racine Avenue, looking north from 59th Street over the proposed Englewood Line trail.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

One inch of rain in Chicago generates approximately four billion gallons of storm water. Since close to 60 percent of Chicago's land area is impervious to absorption (rooftops, roads, sidewalks, parking lots and driveways), most stormwater drains into the City's sewer system, where it is combined with raw sewage and sent to the City's sewage treatment plant. During heavy rainfalls,

the combined system becomes overwhelmed and sends untreated sewage into the Chicago River as a combined sewer overflow. In Chicago, as little as 0.67 inches of rain in a 24-hour period can trigger a combined sewer overflow. Between 2007 and 2012, overflows occurred on 314 days, an average of once per week. The over-burdened sewer system can also

force untreated sewage and rainwater into basements, onto streets and into Lake Michigan, resulting in public health risks, property damage, and beach closings.

The City of Chicago has initiated several citywide strategies to address stormwater. The 2003 Chicago Water Agenda calls for creating green





Inset: Green infrastructure route, with adjacent infiltration area/passive recreational space, looking north on Racine Avenue from 72nd Street.

infrastructure, in both individual public and private projects, to reduce the burden of stormwater on the combined sewer system. In 2008, the Chicago Plan Commission adopted *Adding Green to Urban Design*, which addressed sustainable improvements to Chicago's built environment, highlighting 21 key strategies that would increase the amount and performance of permeable surfaces in Chicago. That same year, the City adopted a *Climate Action Plan* and the Stormwater Ordinance went into effect. The *Climate Action Plan* expanded the rationale for managing stormwater on site by addressing the amount of energy required to pump and treat stormwater once it enters the sewer system. The Stormwater Ordinance enacted performance-driven regulations that require the

first .5 inch of rain to be absorbed on site or the permeability of a new development be increased by 15% from existing conditions.

In 2012, the City issued the *Sustainable Chicago 2015 Agenda*, which aims to create a comprehensive green infrastructure plan as part of the capital budgeting process. Led by the Department of Water Management, the plan provides economic and environmental justification for diverting a portion of the City's budget to develop green infrastructure projects.

With these plans and regulations as the impetus, City planners have initiated recommendations involving the adaptation of City-owned, vacant land as stormwater management

landscapes, along with steps to identify an entity to develop and manage those landscapes. DPD has also initiated the development of data-driven criteria that will be used to target the most appropriate and cost-effective locations for green infrastructure strategies. As part of the GHN planning process, landscapes were strategically identified throughout the area for use as stormwater absorption sites based on locations that are subject to chronic basement and street flooding, locations of City-owned vacant parcels, and data involving sewer pipe capacities and stormwater drainage patterns. Stormwater strategies along existing and proposed bike paths that could enhance bike and pedestrian pathways between existing open spaces were also investigated.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: Design state of the art stormwater landscapes to bring a useful public purpose to vacant City-owned land.

1

Identify strategic locations along designated bike routes and on City-owned land to develop stormwater landscapes as part of the Department of Water Management's Green Infrastructure Plan.

2

Work with local organizations to identify vacant land that is appropriate for green infrastructure projects in public or community managed open spaces.



Left: Ground-level view of a green infrastructure route on Racine Avenue near 59th Street, showing streetscape improvements and curb cut inlets into stormwater infiltration areas.



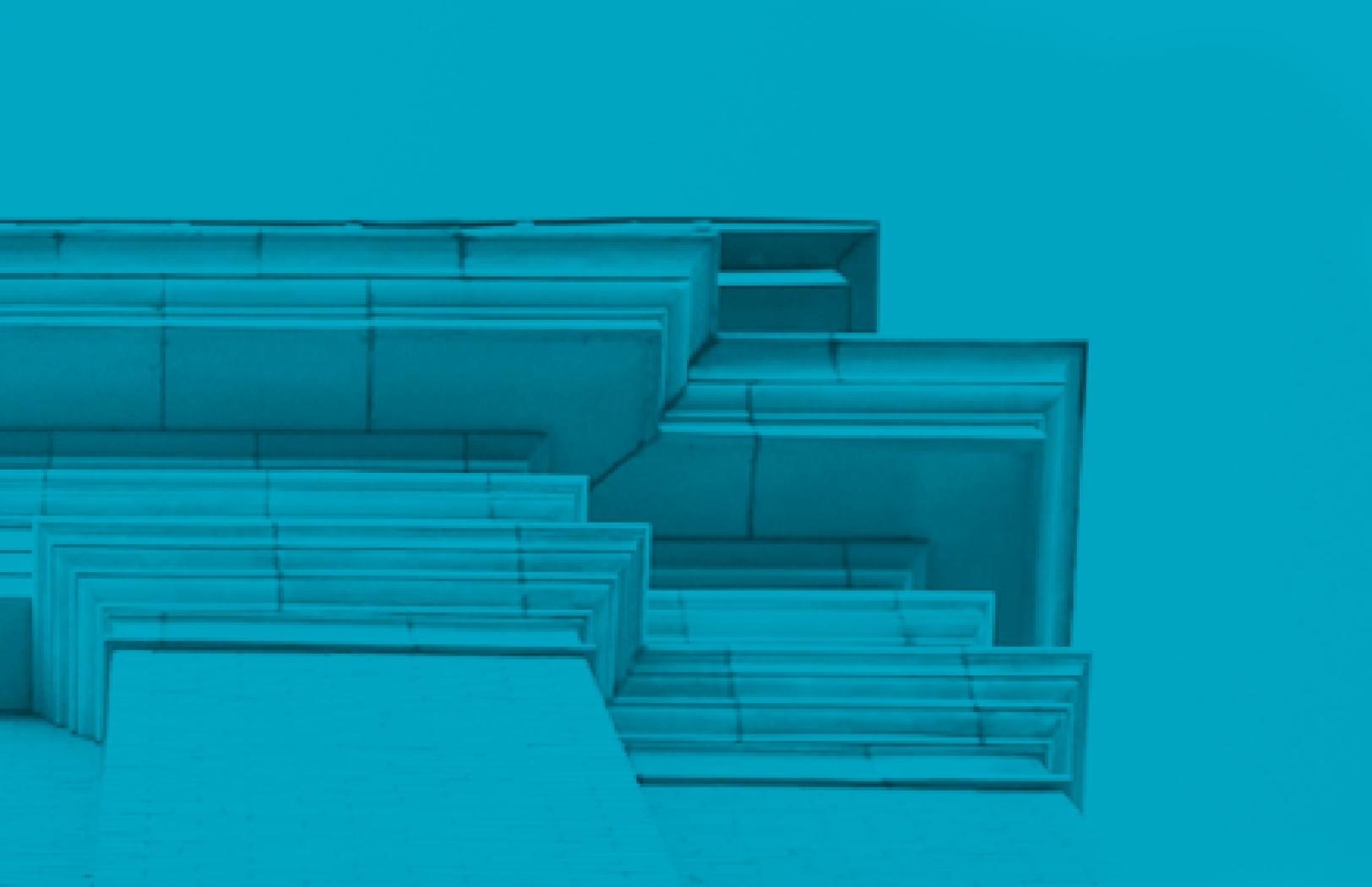
Inset: Green infrastructure route with adjacent infiltration area/passive recreational space, including educational components. View looking north on Racine Avenue from 72nd Street.

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PRES



HISTORIC SERVATION



Below:
Raber House Park, gathering/community
space at park entrance. View looking west
from State and 58th streets.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Sixteen individual buildings within the GHN area have been designated by the Chicago City Council as official Landmarks. As designated Chicago Landmarks, the buildings are eligible for economic incentives for repair and rehabilitation through the Class-L Property Tax Incentive, Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, and a State Property Tax Assessment

Freeze Program. All designated Chicago Landmarks are eligible for a Permit Fee Waiver for City of Chicago building permit fees and special allowances from certain building code requirements and for side-yard exceptions from the zoning ordinance. Owners of historic buildings also have free access to experienced rehabilitation professionals who

provide assistance with technical issues.

Landmark buildings are afforded legal protection under the City of Chicago's Landmarks Ordinance: all building permit applications for alteration, construction, reconstruction, erection, demolition, relocation or other work to these buildings are subject to the prior



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HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOAL AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: Preserve, protect, and restore historic buildings.

- 1 Ensure existing designated Landmarks are preserved and maintained.
- 2 Encourage preservation of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 3 Avoid demolition of buildings identified as “orange” or “red” in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey.
- 4 Assess the benefits of a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) designation.
- 5 Encourage adaptive reuse of vacant, historic school and institutional buildings through financial incentives and planning efforts.

review and approval of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks. The purpose of the Commission’s permit review authority is to ensure that proposed work will not adversely affect any significant historical or architectural features of the designated landmark.

A second tier of historic resources in the GHN area includes buildings and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. National Register properties are not subject to permit reviews or local financial incentives, but they are eligible for Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits and the State Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program.

The *Chicago Historic Resources Survey* (CHRS), completed in 1995, was a decade-long research effort by the City of Chicago to analyze the historic and architectural importance of all buildings constructed in the city prior to 1940. During 12 years of field work

and follow-up research that started in 1983, CHRS surveyors identified 17,371 properties that were considered to have some historic or architectural importance. A color-coded ranking system was used to identify historic and architectural significance relative to age, degree of external physical integrity, and level of possible significance. The highest ranking color codes are Red and Orange, of which there are a number in the GHN area. These properties possess some architectural feature or historical association that makes them potentially significant in the context of the surrounding community.

Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) are an alternative mechanism for preserving older neighborhoods that may not qualify for official designation as a landmark districts. Compared to landmark districts, the regulations on alteration or demolition in an NCD can be less-restrictive or more narrowly

enforced. Furthermore, the thresholds for architectural or historic significance and physical integrity in an NCD can be lower than the high bar set for Chicago Landmark districts. NCD’s are a relatively new historic preservation tool, and while they have been adopted in several U.S. cities, Chicago has not established a NCD.

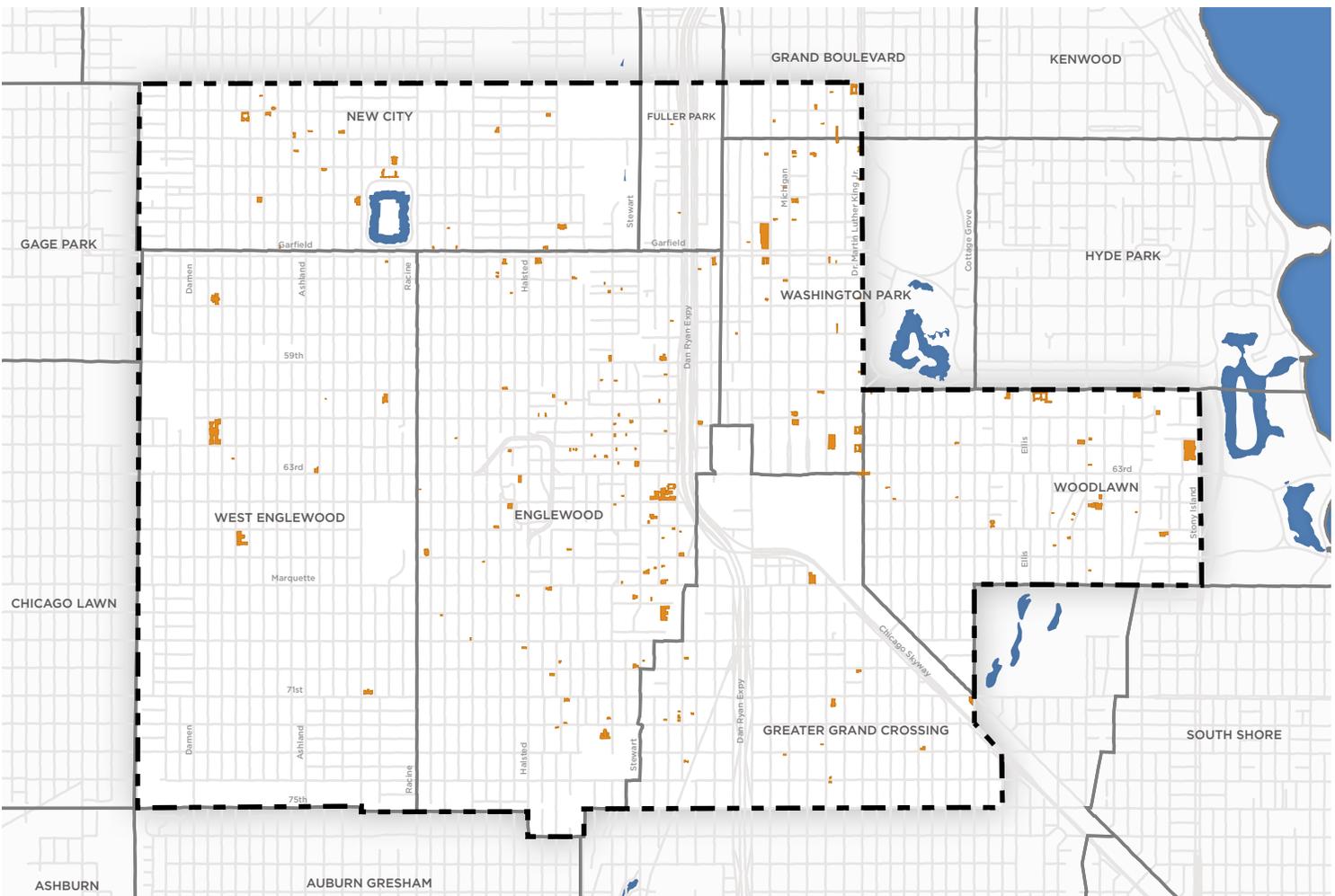
In the GHN area, NCD regulations could: encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures, discourage demolition of structures with historical and or architectural significance, support and encourage the renovation of historic structures in a manner that maintains or enhances the architectural character of existing buildings, support and encourage the continued use of non-historic buildings, and encourage new construction that is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

To be successful, neighborhood

residents must demonstrate strong support for a NCD and be prepared for ongoing participation in developing the type and level of regulation desired by the community. NCD residents may also participate in review of proposed alterations, additions, and demolition of buildings as well as new construction within the district. In addition to regulation, a successful NCD in the GHN area would need to include some financial assistance to encourage rehabilitation as the aforementioned incentives for local landmarks and National Register properties would not be available. The goal of rehabilitation

and restoration in an NCD is to gradually reclaim the historic and architectural character that the neighborhood once had. Over time the NCD could become eligible for Chicago landmark designation, and they should be reviewed for this status every five to 10 years.

GREEN HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS AREA HISTORIC RESOURCES



 Orange Rated Building  GHN Area

A BIG THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED

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Xavier Smith

